

THE
MIRACLES
OF
JESUS
VINDICATED.

PART III

CONTAINING

A Defence of the Literal Story of
JESUS's causing the BARREN
FIG-TREE to Wither away,

AND

His turning the WATER into WINE.

The SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N :

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THE
MIRACLES

OF

THE
UNBORN
CHILD

BY
J. M. T. III.

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It is a True and a well known Observation of the Lord Bacon, that *a little Philosophy inclines Men's Minds to Atheism, but that Depth in Philosophy brings them about to Religion again*: And it may as justly be said that a slender Acquaintance with the Scripture furnishes Men with Doubts and Objections, which a thorough Knowledge of it would soon ease them from. A greater Instance of this can scarcely be given than in the six *Discourses* not long since published upon our Saviour's Miracles, in which every Intelligent Reader must be at a loss whether he should most admire the Boldness or the Ignorance of the Author; for thro' the Whole there appears such an Unacquaintedness with the Jewish History, Customs and Forms of speaking, as shews that there are *Arts* which Mr. W. is not enough Master of; and such a want of Sincerity in his Quotations and Applications of them, as shews that there is an *Art* which he is too much Master of.

In opposition to what he has so boldly advanced in those *Discourses*, my first Part began (where every Rational Apology for the Truth of the Christian Revelation should begin) with shewing by Direct Proof that *Jesus* did truly Raise himself from the Dead, as he had foretold; that the profess'd *Witnesses* of his Resurrection could not possibly be Deceived in this Matter, the Evidence which they had for it being such as excluded all Mistake, upon any Supposition whatever; and that there is a strong Proof of their not intending to Deceive us by a False Testimony, as any Fact is capable of receiving, nay more than any other Fact in the world ever did receive.

And this sure Foundation being laid, the Consequence, which was then drawn from it, seems Clear, and Undeniable, *viz.* that if *Jesus* wrought, this One Miracle, which must be allowed to have been the greatest that could be wrought, it is Unreasonable, it is Perverse, not to allow the Reality of the Other Miracles which the Evangelists ascribe to him: And therefore all Objections raised against the Literal Story of them, (if they could be answered no other way) yet might receive a Satisfactory Answer by saying, that the Miracle being a True one, it is highly Improbable that any of the Circumstances, with which the Story of it is told, were otherwise. Things may seem strange and difficult to Us at such a distance of time, and this is easily accounted for; but there is no account to be given, why the Evangelists should, in relating a Real Miracle, add such false Circumstances to it, as would help to destroy its Credit. So that the Question comes to this, whether an Apostle or Mr. *W.* is to be believed; an Apostle who was Eye-witness to the Fact, or Mr. *W.* who was no Witness, and whom in several Instances I have proved to be a False Witness.

With this Evidence then in hand I enter'd (in my second Part) upon a particular Examination of the two first Actions of *Jesus*, which Mr. *W.* had objected

jected to, and endeavoured to clear the Literal Story of them from all the Difficulties which he had load-
ed them with: and in the course of this Enquiry I
now and then set before him some Instances of the
Dishonesty of his Quotations from the Fathers and
others, that he might at least see that he was disco-
ver'd, and never expect that his bare Word should
pass for Current in any Argument hereafter.

My present Design is to do the same by two more
of the Miracles, which he has endeavoured to expose;
but as I am not bound to follow the Order in which
he has plac'd the Miracles, (a Thing of no weight
either to his Cause or Mine,) I have singled out those
which he professes to have treated the most *Ludicrously*,
and which I thought to want the most help towards
vindicating the Literal account of them. I shall there-
fore without further Preface enter upon

III. The Story of (a) *Jesus's cursing the Fig-tree*, not
despairing to convince even Him that it was neither
an Absurd, Foolish, and Ridiculous, nor a *Malicious and*
Un-natur'd Act, as he has been pleas'd in his manner-
ly way to call it.

The Reader may not be at leisure enough to ap-
prove of a Solemn Answer to every Trifle; and there-
fore I shall confine my self to such objections made
by Mr. *W.* against the Literal account of this Mi-
racle, as are of most Weight, and may seem to deserve
some Consideration; and they are these Three.

How could *Jesus* expect to find Fruit upon this
Fig-tree, when *the time of Figs was not yet?* p. 6.

What Legal Right had he to the Fruit, if he had
found any on the Tree? p. 8. and

What Right had he to smite the Tree with a Curse,
when it was none of his Property? p. 8.

(a) Mr. *W.*'s Discourse 3d. p. 4.

1. §. The first of these Questions has indeed something Material in it, because as *St. Mark* xi. 13. reports this Fact in our Translation, there is more room for Cavil than in any other Instance which *Mr. W.* has singled out to quarrel with: *St. Mark's* words are these, *And seeing a Fig-tree afar off, having Leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon; and when he came to it, he found nothing but Leaves, for the time of Figs was not yet.*

At first sight any Candid Reader will imagine that the Passage was some how misunderstood, and that the Evangelist, who writes so good sense in the other parts of his Gospel, would not have writ down-right Nonsense in This.

And therefore I shall endeavour to clear up this matter; for the doing of which I shall shew two things, viz. that at the time when *Jesus* went up to the *Fig-tree*, it was a Season to expect to find ripe Figs in *Judea*; and secondly, that the words of *St. Mark* may be understood so as to be consistent with this Circumstance.

Whoever reads the Gospels carefully will be convinced that the day, on which *Jesus* wrought this Miracle on the *Fig-tree*, was about the 11th of the first Jewish Month, *Nisan*, (a) or *Tuesday* before the *Passover*; *Mr. W.* indeed says † that *there are no Grounds from the Text to think so*; but there are Grounds from that Text compar'd with others, and the Proof of it is so plain that none but such a sort of Free-thinker as He could miss it. Now it is well known that the *Passover* was kept by the *Jews* on the four-

(a) The Month *Nisan* was called also *Abib*, i. e. the Month of the first-ripe fruits: and one time of Harvest (i. e. the first) was in this Month in *Judea*, as appears from *Josh.* iii. 25. and iv. 19. compar'd together; for on the 10th day of the first Month the People pass'd over *Jordan*, and it then overflow'd its Banks, which (as is there said) it us'd to do all the time of Harvest.

† Page 29.

teenth day of their first month, *Nisan*, that is, about the latter end of our *March*.

The Point then to be enquired into, is, whether at that time, (or three days before) there us'd to be any Figs in *Judea* so Ripe as to be fit for eating; and that there us'd to be such, may be shewn by the following Arguments.

(a) *Josephus* tells us, that at the end of the winter *Herod* besieged *Jerusalem*, and that after a siege of five Months it was taken in the third Month, *i. e.* the Month *Sivan*, which answers to the last half of our *May*, and the first half of our *June*. Count then five Months back from thence, and you will find that the Winter ended and the Spring began in *Judea* about the middle of our *January*: Now *Solomon* in *Canticles* ch. ii. among other marks of the Winter's being past, and consequently of the Spring's beginning in that Country, describes This to be one, that *the Fig-tree putteth forth her green Figs, and the Vines with the tender Grape give a good Smell*, ver. 13. or rather thus, *The Fig-tree hath begun to give a Flavour, or Sweetness, or Ripeness to the unripe Fig; and the Vines to give a good Smell to the tender Grape*: For the (b)

original

(a) Compare what he says *De Bell. Jud. Lib. 1. cap. 17, 18.* with what he says *Antiq. Jud. Lib. 14. c. 16. Edit. Hudson.*

(b) *Paggiab*, which in this Passage our Translators have render'd by *Green Figs*, is no where found in the Old Testament, except here: but it is a common Word among the *Arabians*, and signifies *Crudum, immaturum*, as a Learned Friend of mine informs me, who finds *Eben-Ezra* too of the same sentiment, when he explains it by *Fruit before it is ripe or Mellow*, and asserts that it has the very same sense in the *Arabick Tongue*.

The Word *Kanat*, here render'd by our Translators *putteth forth*, signifies *condiuit aromatibus* in *Gen. 1. 2, 3, and 26.* the only places where it is us'd: *Pagninus* in the margin of his Bible renders it by *dulcescere fecit*; but, as the abovemention'd Gentleman assures me, this Word hath another sense in the *Arabian Language*, which is very pertinent to this place, tho' not taken notice of by the Commentators, viz. *Rubuit, Maturuit*: So that the Sense of the Place will then be; *The Fig-tree hath begun to*

make

original Words are thus to be translated: And if in the middle of our *January*, the Figs were so forward as Then to have a Flavour, and to have begun to ripen, it is unreasonable to think that in so Warm and Fruitful a Climate there might not be Ripe ones about the latter end of *March*, which was the time when our Saviour sought for them on this Fig-tree.

Again; we are told in *Numb. xiii.* that when *Moses* sent the Spies to search the Land of *Canaan*, *the time was the time of the First-ripe Grapes*, ver. 20. and that *they returned from searching the Land after forty days*, ver. 25. and that they brought with them from thence *Figs*, as well as *Clusters of Grapes full-grown*, as the Weight of them shew'd them to be, ver. 23. Now the *LXX* Version says that (a) *the time was the time of Spring*; and of the same Opinion was *Philo* in his *Life of Moses*, for he introduces him as telling the Spies, when he sent them, that (b) *the Season was then the Fittest for discovering the Goodness of the Country, because it was Spring, and as charging them not to return till the Summer was come, that they might bring of the Fruits of the Land for a Sample*. Supposing then that it was towards the middle of the *Spring*, or about the middle of our *February*, when the Spies set out, and allowing that they were gone forty days (as the Text says), it will follow that they return'd a

make her Figs ripe, which were before Unripe, or Sweet, which were before Sowr; both expressions amounting to the same thing. To confirm which interpretation the same Learned Person observes, that *R. Sol. Jarchi* expounds the former part of the Verse thus, *The Fig-tree was come to the time of her first-ripe fruits*; as *Eben Ezra* expounds the latter part thus, *The Vine approach'd the time of the Wine Offerings*.

(a) ἡμεῖραι, ἡμέραι ἔαρος, πρόδρομοι σαυλῆς. *LXX. Numb. xiii. 20.*

(b) Ὁ δὲ καιρὸς, ἐν ᾧ μάλιστα χάρας ἀρετὴν δοκιμάζεισθαι συγγένηκεν ἔαρίσιν, ὁ νῦν ἐφύσηκεν. — ἀμεινον δ' αὖ σὺν τῇ ἐπιμείναι μέχρι δέρας ἀμύζουσι, καὶ διακομίσαι καρπὸς, δυνάμει δόγματα χάρας ἐνδαμνον. pag. 435. Edit. Turnebi.

few days before the Passover; and if they brought Figs along with them as well as Ripe or full-grown Grapes, and if the one Fruit was as forward as the other (which the Song of *Solomon* before quoted plainly supposes), then there were Ripe Figs in the Land of *Judæa* at that very time of the Year when *Jesus* sought for them upon this Fig-tree.

It is own'd that no direct mention is made of the *Spring* in the *Hebrew Text*; but *Philo* and those Translators of the Law, who were *Jews*, may well be suppos'd to have known that the Expression, *the time of the First-ripe Grapes*, was Equivalent to that of the *Spring*; and We, who are no *Jews*, may fairly suppose, that this search was made in the *Spring*, that the *Israelites* might have the Summer before them for their Invasion of the Land, which they intended to have immediately entred into, as appears from ch. xiv. 44. Thus much at least the Testimonies of the *LXX.* and of *Philo* must be allow'd to prove, that they took it for granted that there were Figs ripe there by the time of the *Passover*, or else they would never have assign'd the *Spring* for the time of the Departure of the Spies, when they knew that at the end of forty days they brought back Ripe Figs along with them.

To what has been said may be added, that *Josephus* (a) describing the Fruitfulness of the Country of *Genesareth*, which was a Part of *Judæa*, says that it afforded *Figs and Grapes ten Months in the Year without Intermission*; and tho' some allowance is to be made for the Extraordinary Fertility of that Territory, yet the other Branches of the Country must be suppos'd to have afforded these Fruits a great part of the Year, especially That where this Fig-tree grew, it being between *Jerusalem* and *Bethany*, i. e. in the Lot of the

(a) Τὰ μὲν γὰρ βασιλικώτατα, σαφελὴν τε καὶ ὁρῶν, ἴδμεν
ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱεροῦ Χρυσοῦ. De Bell. jud. L. 2, c. 9. Ed.
Hudson.

Tribe of *Benjamin*, which (as the same *Josephus* tells us) (a) was second to no part of *Canaan* in Fruitfulness.

Upon such Authorities as these, drawn from the Jewish Writers themselves, we know what to make of the *First-ripe Figs* so often mention'd by the Prophets of the Old Testament. For God says in *Hosea* ix. 10. *I saw your Fathers as the first-ripe in the Fig-tree at her time*; and these Early Figs seem to have been much esteemed among the *Jews*, for *Jerem.* xxiv. 2. speaks of a *Basket, that had very Good Figs, even like the Figs that are first ripe*: And (to mention no other Passages) the Greediness, with which the *Jews* us'd to gather this Pleasant Fruit, is thus describ'd by *Isaiab* xxviii. 4 *As the hasty Fruit* i. e. (b) the first-ripe Figs) *before the Summer, which when he that looketh upon it, seeth it, while it is yet in his hand, he eateth it up, i. e.* (as the (c) *LXX* explain it) he that seeth it, is ready to devour it before he gathers it, so very fond are men of this sort of Figs. And that we may not mistake the Season when these so-much-coveted Figs were pluck'd for eating, *Isaiab* here tells us that it was *before the Summer*, which (as appears by what I have quoted from *Philo*, p. 8.) began in *Judæa* about the time of the Passover; and therefore the proper time of a Traveller's looking for these *first-ripe Figs*, was the time when our Saviour came up for that purpose to this Fig-tree.

The Case seems to have been This; either there were two different sorts of Fig-trees in *Judæa*, the one forwarder than the other; or (what I rather think) the same Fig-trees, yielded Fruit there twice in each Year, once about the time of the Passover, and the second time much later.

That there was a particular sort of Fig-trees in *Judæa*, *Pliny* seems to say when he speaks of one that

(a) *Antiqu. Jud. Lib. 5. c. 1. Ed. Hudson.*

(b) *LXX. ὅς τις πρόδωκε σὺν.*

(c) *LXX. ὁ ἰδὼν αὐτὸ, πρὶν εἰς τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτὸ, δαίσει αὐτὸ καταπιῖν.*

grew in *Syria* (under which name he often comprehends *Judæa*) and gives this account of it, that (a) *it had Leaves always on it, and that when the Fruit of the preceeding year was gathered about the Dog-days, the new Fruit began immediately, and was growing all the winter long.*

But whether this Fig-tree was of that sort or not; yet *Pliny* says of Fig-trees in general, that *they* (b) *bear an early ripe fruit, i. e. the most Hearty and Vigorous of them produce young Figs in the end of Autumn* (as they do often among Us) which hang on the Trees all the Winter, and then ripen early in the Spring; *aliena præcoces anno*, as *Pliny* elegantly expresses it: These were called *Prodromi* at *Athens*, the name which the LXX often give to the *First-ripe Figs*; and of this sort it is that he says, (c) *the Leaves of the Fig-trees come later than the Fruit.*

From all which I conclude, that there might have been Figs in *Judæa* so Ripe as to be fit for Eating at the time when *Jesus* went up to this Fig-tree; and that these early Figs were of so good a Kind, that Travellers among the *Jews* were commonly inclin'd to eat them; and that *Jesus* seeing this Fig-tree to have Leaves, (which, as *Pliny* says, were later than the Fruit) had good reason to go up to it, expecting to find Fruit thereon.

What remains then to be prov'd is this, *viz.* that the words of *St. Mark*, *ὁ δὲ ἦν κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν*, may be so interpreted as to be consistent with what has been already prov'd.

(a) *Similis his filiqua, quam* (Al. *Similis & quam*) *Iones Cerauniam* vocant; *trunco & ipsa fertilis, sed pomo Siliqua: Ob id quidam Egyptiam Ficum dixerere errore manifesto; non enim in Egypto nascitur, sed in Syria—semper comantibus foliis—pomo antecedentis anni circa Canis ortus detracto statim alterum parit, per Arcturum hyeme satis enutrient.* Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 8.

(b) *Ficus & Præcoces habet, quos Athenis Prodromos vocant.* Lib. 16. 26.

(c) *Excepta Fico, cui serius Folium nascitur quam Pomum.* Lib. 16. 26.

And Mr. *W.* himself has furnish'd us with (*a*) an Interpretation of the words which will serve the purpose ; for he has fallen in with some of the Modern Commentators, and has recommended the reading of St. Mark's words by way of Interrogation, *for was it not the time of Figs ?* Admitting this small change, and putting a part of the Sentence into a Parenthesis, the whole Verse will run thus ; *And seeing a Fig-tree afar off having Leaves, he came if haply he might find any thing thereon (and when he came to it he found nothing but Leaves), for was it not the time of Figs ?* By the help of the Parenthesis the last words are a good reason for what went immediately before the Parenthesis, *i. e.* for *Jesus's* expecting to find Fruit upon the Tree : And this way of writing might be shewn to be very common in all Authors especially the Sacred ones.

Upon this Interpretation of the words Mr. *W.* says all the *Difficulty vanishes* ; but this he says, *after* he had made the most of this Difficulty, and expos'd St. Mark's account with all the Raillery and Ill-will that he could shew, for (*b*) a page or two together. Where then is the Candour, where the Honesty of such a Behaviour ? What ? ridicule the Evangelist as guilty of an Absurdity, and yet have a Solution of that Absurdity ready at hand ? A plain Mark that it is not Truth which this Author aims at ! but this is only one Mark out of a thousand.

And yet I can help Mr. *W.* to some other Solutions of this Difficulty, where there is no Change of the Point, and which I prefer to His, as more Natural, and answering the purpose with the same effect : Suppose then that by the words, *for the time of Figs was not yet*, may be meant, that the time of gathering Figs was not yet come ; and thus, keeping the Parenthesis as before plac'd in the middle of the Sentence, we may understand the words as a reason given why

Jesus came if haply he might find any thing on the Fig-tree. The Fig-harvest (if I may so call the Gathering-time) was not yet arrived: On the second day of Unleaven'd Bread, which was about five or six Days after This, the First-Fruits of all, that was then Ripe, were solemnly offer'd in the Temple; and till Then the Owners of the Fig-trees were not allow'd to gather in their Fruit; so that till Then they were oblig'd to let their Figs (tho' Ripe) hang on the Trees, and consequently five or six days before the Passover (i. e. when *Jesus* went up to this Tree) any Traveller might expect to find Fruit upon the Early Fig-trees which he met with in his Journey.

That by the *Time of Figs*, may be here meant the time of gathering them, is no new Opinion of mine; It has been maintain'd by Dr. *Lucas*, and by the Excellent Bishop *Floyd*; and I find Dr. *Whitby* mentioning it as the Ingenious Exposition of a Reverend and Learned Bishop, whom he does not name; and tho' he does not agree with him, yet he declares that he should acquiesce in this Interpretation, if he could find it prov'd that any Figs were fit to be gather'd at the Passover. This (I think) I have prov'd with such a degree of Evidence as Dr. *Whitby* would have admitted. And for the time of Figs signifying the time of gathering them, there is good Authority from the Writings of the sacred Penmen. This seems to be the Sense of the word *καιρος*, time or season, in *Psal.* i. 4. (according to the LXX.) (a) *which shall give its Fruit in its Season*, i. e. at the time of gathering it: And this (I think) certainly is the Sense of the word in *St. Mark* xii 2. but particularly in *St. Matt.* xxi. 34. who says that when the Lord of the Vineyard in the Parable sent his Servants to the Husbandmen, that they might receive the Fruits of it, it was when the time of the Fruit drew near, *ὅτε ἤγγισεν ὁ καιρὸς τῶν καρπῶν*, i. e. when the time of gathering them was at hand; for, it being most natural

(a) Ὁ τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ δώσειν κατὰ αὐτῆ.

to suppose that the Servants were not sent more early than there was need, the time of ripe Grapes was probably then actually come, and only the time of gathering them drew near.

But if this Solution should not please some Readers; if it should not be allowed me to give this Sense to *the time of Figs*, yet from what has been shewn on the former head, there may be drawn an Interpretation free from all Objection. For if there were two *times* or Seasons of ripe Figs in *Judaea*, the one much later than the other; and if the later Season was much more plentiful and common than the former (as is natural to suppose) then the later Season was properly *the time of Figs*, and of this it was truly said by the Evangelist, that then (at the Passover) *it was not yet come*. Jesus seeing a Fig-tree at a distance that had Leaves on it, and the Leaves coming later than the early Figs, he did not know but this Fig-tree might be one of those which bore early Ripe Figs, and might therefore have Fruit on it at that time; On this account *he came up to it, saying, if haply he might find any thing thereon*; looking on the Circumstance of its having Leaves as a Likely Mark of its having Fruit, but not as a Sure one, because the Trees which bore only the later Figs might have Leaves on them; and therefore he came up to the Fig-tree doubtful whether he should find any, for *the ordinary time of Figs was not yet come*; then a Man might have expected to find Figs on every Tree, but now they were to be found only on Some, which were more strong and Vigorous than Ordinary; of this sort the Leaves seem'd to promise this Tree to be, and we may suppose that of this sort it was; so that in this way of interpreting St. Mark, the words *for the time of Figs was not yet*, are meant of the Common and Ordinary Season, and are assign'd as a reason why Jesus went up to the Fig-tree, *if haply he might find*, having only some Hope, but not trusting that he should find Fruit thereon.

But let Mr. *W.* choose which Solution he will, (his Own, if he pleases) and he must acknowledge that there is a sufficient answer given to the suppos'd *Unreasonableness of Jesus's expecting to find Fruit out of Season.*

Having dwelt pretty long on this head, because it contain'd the most material part of his Discourse, I shall now proceed briefly to the second Objection.

2. §. What Legal Right *Jesus* had to the Fruit, if he had found any on the Tree?

To which I answer, that he had a Right, and a Legal one too, tho' he was neither Landlord nor Tenant; (as Mr. *W.* expresses it) nor had any House or Land of his own by Law. And what I say, will be prov'd thus. There is a Law given by God to the *Jews* in Deut. xxiii. 24, 25. to this purpose, *When thou comest into thy Neighbour's Vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes to thy fill, at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put any in thy Vessel: And when thou comest into the standing Corn of thy Neighbour's, then thou mayest pluck the Ears with thine hand, but thou shalt not move a Sickle unto thy Neighbour's standing Corn.*

Bishop Patrick in his Commentary on this place says, that the *Jewish* Doctors extended this Law, (and indeed the Reason of the Law extended it) not only to Grapes and Corn, the two mention'd Particulars; but to Olives, Figs, Dates; and all common eatable Fruits: And (a) *Josephus* confirms this by applying the Law to ripe Fruits of this kind in general, and adding that the benefit of this Indulgence reached not only to *Jews*, but to all Travellers (whether Natives or not) on the high way in Judæa; who had a Right by vertue of this Law, to eat of any ripe Fruits that they met with, as freely as if they were their own Property. This then being a Part of the Common Law of the Country, and no man

(a) Antiq. Jud. L. 4. c. 8. Μὴδὲ ὁ νόμος ἀπαγορεύει κολλῆσαι τὸν καρπὸν τῶν ὀρέων καὶ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐξ ὧν αὐτοὶ ἐπιτρέψονται ἀρτίστασθαι, καὶ ὁ ἴσχυρος τοῦ νόμου καὶ ἔστιν.

having such a Property in his Fruit-trees, as to exclude Travellers and Passengers from this Benefit, *Jesus* would have done no Injury to the Owner of this Fig-tree, if he had found Figs upon it, and gathered them; because he would only have done what he had a Right to do, and what all his Countrymen lawfully did on the like occasion. What then must we say of this Author, who insinuates that *Jesus would have been a Rob-Orchard, if he had had an Opportunity?* Vile insinuation! and, no less Weak than Vile, since it is founded on an Ignorance of this Jewish Law which was so easy to be known!

I come then to the 3^d. and last Objection, which is this, *What Right had Jesus to smite this Tree with a Curse, when it was none of his Property?*

And to this several sufficient answers have been frequently given; for brevity's sake I shall content myself with giving One at present;

According to the Christian Scheme, which supposes *Jesus* to be (what I have prov'd him in my first Part to be). a Prophet sent from God and acting by the Spirit of God, there is no Difficulty in justifying this his behaviour: For God must be allowed to have a superior Right over all things, and a Property in them of a higher Nature than any that a Human Owner of them has. Not only *all the Beasts of the Forest are his* (as God himself declares by the *Psalmist*, l. 10.) but so are the Cattle upon a thousand Hills: and it is in virtue of this Right that God is often found in the Old Testament threatening the *Jews* by his Prophets, that he would lay their Land waste, and destroy all the Trees with their Fruits for the Punishment of their Sins: And thus we find in our Saviour's days that the *Jews* had (a) filled up the measure of their Iniquities, and were at this very time, when *Jesus* smote the Fig-tree with a Curse, devoted with their Country to Ruin, and

Destruction: *The things which belong'd to their peace,* were even then *bid from their Eyes*, as he tells them, *Luke xix. 42.* and he goes on in the following verses to pronounce the Sentence already determin'd against *Jerusalem.*

And we find farther that the Execution of this Sentence was put into the hands of *Jesus* under the title (a) or *the son of man.* Where then was the Injustice, if that Judgment, which he was authoriz'd to execute upon the whole Land and all the Produce thereof, he executed (for a wise and good-natur'd Reason, as I shall shew by and by) upon one Tree in his Life-time? Where all things are justly consign'd over to Ruin, no Injury is done if some part has its Punishment hasten'd and brought upon it before the time is come for the rest: as when several Men are sentenc'd to Death for the same Crime, it is no Injustice to call immediately for the Forfeit of one Life among them, and leave the others for some more Convenient season. It is just the same with a Nation consider'd as consisting of Parts; the Ruin of some Cities, Houses, or Trees may justly take place of the rest, where all are given over to Destruction: And therefore *Jesus*, if he had a Right to execute a Curse on the whole Land of *Judaea*, must be allowed a Right to execute a Curse upon so small a Part of it, as this Fig-tree was.

And less Objection still is to be made against it, if he design'd the Punishment of this Tree for an Emblem to the *Jews* of what their Case then was, and what their Punishment wou'd shortly be: for it was not *Passion* and *Disappointment* in not finding Figs on it, when he was Hungry, that set him to work this Miracle; that is Mr. *W's* ill-natur'd suggestion, for which he has no Authority unless his own Experience of what Lengths of Mischief *Passion* and *Disappointment* uses to carry Him. But this Action of *Jesus* had a higher and a more worthy End and View in it; for

(a) Mat. xxiv. 30, 37, 38. Mark xiii. 26. Luke xxi. 27, 36.

St. *Matth.* xxi. 19. relates this proceeding of *Jesus* towards the Fig-tree as well as St. *Mark*, and joins to the account of it two Parables, which he spake about the same time to the *Jews*, and which he concludes with this remarkable application, *Therefore I say unto you, the Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and given to a Nation bringing forth the Fruits thereof*, ver. 43. which is a Key to open our Saviour's meaning in his blasting the Fig-tree as well as in his two Parables, for from thence this Moral may be gather'd, that the *Fig-tree* is the Jewish Nation, that the *Kingdom of God* or the Gospel was preached to them, but they were Barren; they would not repent, and (as *John* the Baptist speaks) *bring forth fruits meet for Repentance*. They were therefore taught by this Miracle perform'd on the Barren Fig-tree, that the Gospel wou'd be remov'd from them, and that (for their rejecting it) they wou'd be left to their own *Unfruitful works of Darkness*, and would be consign'd over to Destruction, to *wither away* as a Nation, and be *dried up from the roots*. And the Sentence, *Let no man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever*, has been hitherto verifi'd, that unhappy Nation having continued in the same barren state, and lying to this day under the Moral of the Curse pronounced upon that Fig-tree.

It was very usual among the Easterns to express Things by Actions; variety of Instances to this purpose might be given out of the *Old and New Testament*; and therefore when the Warning, given by this Action to the whole Nation of the *Jews*, was so Charitable and Benevolent an one, it is meer Perverseness to cavil at this Miracle, because it was a Destructive one to the Tree; It was so, but it meant to prevent the Destruction of a Nation; and that, you will allow, was the Reverse of a *Malicious* and *Ill-natur'd* Act: But, strip it of this Moral, and suppose the Fig-tree to have only undergone the Punishment to which the whole Land was doom'd; was it Therefore no Miracle? may not God work a Miracle to Chastise

as well as to Bless? Who or What prescribes him a Law to the Contrary? *Ananias* was struck Dead, and *Elymas* the Sorcerer was smitten with Blindness; and were there Therefore no Miracles in these two Cases, because there was Destruction? This way of arguing, would be to rob God of his power of inflicting Extraordinary Punishments on Sinners. Why then does Mr. *W.* assert that this Action of *Jesus* is (a) *not to be accounted for, because it was to the Destruction of another man's harmless and inoffensive Tree?* And why are the Excellent Arch-bishop *Wake*, and the Ingenious Mr. *Chandler* summon'd so rudely before him, to reconcile with this and some other Miracles the general Notion of a Miracle, which the One taught, and the Other (as he says) approved? For to execute a justly deserved Punishment upon some Persons or Things, especially if with a View to promote some great and general good, is an Action *consistent with the Perfections of God to interest himself in, such as answers to the Character of God as a Good and Gracious Being, and shews his Love to Mankind and his Inclination to do them good,* which with Mr. *Chandler* are some of the Rules of Judging, by whom Miracles are perform'd. The best and most Gracious of Earthly Monarchs do sometimes Punish particular Persons when Criminal, in Love and Goodness to their Subjects; and a contrary behaviour would have more of Cruelty than Benevolence in it. And this I have shew'd to be the Case in the *Driving the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple*, in the *permitting the Devils to enter into the Herd of Swine to their Destruction*, and in this Miracle (now before us) of *blasting the Fig tree*: All which I have prov'd to have been done by way of Punishment deservedly inflicted, and in such Cases Punishment is no Injury. This therefore is a full Defence of the Arch-bishop's and Mr. *Chandler's* Notions of a true Miracle, and it comes long before *latter Lammas*, contrary to Mr. *W's* Insinuation.

I think that there is nothing material on this head, which that Author has started, and which I have left unanswer'd; unless it be his Peculiar reasoning in p. 17, against the Letter of this Miracle, from what *Jesus* says to his Disciples on this occasion, in *Mat. xxi. 21.* *that if they had Faith, they should not only do what was done to the Fig-tree; but if they should say to this Mountain, Be thou remov'd and cast into the Sea, it shall be done:* Because this was never Literally done by the Disciples, that we read of, therefore he concludes that *Jesus* did not Literally curse the Fig-tree. But might not the Disciples have a Power given them to do this among other Miracles, without ever having occasion to shew their Power in this Instance? There might be neither a *Failure in Jesus's Promise*, nor a *Want of Faith* in them for the doing this Miracle, and yet it might never have been perform'd, because no proper Opportunity might have called for this Demonstration of their Power: And with this answer I leave him to be convinc'd, if he be capable of Conviction.

In his Criticisms upon the Greek Text, particularly upon St. *Matthew's* words, which he renders thus, p. 29. *(a) Not as yet, or not until now, against the Age has fruit grown on thee,* he has follow'd no Commentator, and, I can promise him, will never be followed by any: The Translation is his Own, and tho' he is safe now, yet when a School-boy he would have suffer'd for such Stuff as he now dictates with the Air of a Master.

But Ignorance may be excus'd in one who has so much greater Faults to answer for: Before I close the Subject of this Miracle, I shall give the Reader a Sample or two of his barefac'd Dishonesty in Quotations from the Fathers.

St. *Austin* (according to him, p. 4.) *very plainly says that this Fact in Jesus, upon supposition that it was done, was a foolish one:* That Father's Words, as Mr. W.

(a) ΜΗΚΕΤΙ ΕΝ ΟΥ ΚΑΡΠΟΣ ΓΕΝΗΤΑΙ ΕΙΣ Τ' ΑΙΩΝΑ.

himself has quoted them at the bottom of his page, are these, *Hoc Factum, nisi Figuratum, stultum invenitur*, i. e. *This which Jesus did, was a Foolish Action, unless it had some Figurative meaning*. Is this saying that it was Foolish, upon supposition that it was done? Does not St. *Austin* expressly allow it to have been done, when he says *hoc factum*? And does not he directly charge the Folly upon something Else, upon a supposition that it had no other meaning than a Literal one? A Pen and a Spirit like that of St. *Austin* might put this Forgery in such a Light as Mr. *W.* would not care for.

Again p. 16. he brings in *Origen* saying that there are some things spoken of in the Evangelists as Facts, which were never transacted. But (a) *Origen* speaks of the Historical parts of the Scripture in general, and shews what he means, by the Instances which he gives out of the Old and New Testament, such as God's walking in the Garden in the cool of the Day; his being spoken of as having Hands, and Mouth, and Ears; and with regard to the Gospel Precepts he Instances in the plucking out a right Eye, and cutting off a right hand, as things that might possibly be done, but never were: And then he subjoins a request to his Readers not to think that it was his Opinion, that, because some things were not done according to the Letter of the History, therefore he would destroy the Credit of the Scripture History.

If Mr. *W.* then read the one Passage he should have read the other, and not have brought in *Origen* as giving a Testimony which he expressly disclaims.

In p. 9. he quotes St. *John* of Jerusalem as saying, *Arbor non est juste siccata, the Fig-tree was not Justly dried up*. But these words are only a piece of the Sentence which runs thus, *Dicat aliquis, Si tempus non erat Ficorum, non peccavit Ficus, quæ fructum non habebat: si autem non peccavit, non est juste siccata, i. e.*

(a) *Historia Scripturæ interdum inserit quædam vel minus gesta, vel quæ omnino non geri possunt; interdum quæ possunt geri, nec tamen gesta sunt. De Principiis, L. 4.*

It may be objected, that if it was not the time of Figs, then the tree was not in fault for having none; and if it was not in fault, then it was not justly dried up. Where the Reader sees that what *M. W.* quotes as that Father's Sentiment, is only an Objection which he puts into the Mouth of some Adversary to Christianity, some *W.* of that Age: To which Objection he immediately subjoins an Answer (such as it is), which he thought a sufficient one, but which *Mr. W.* has Unfairly taken no notice of.

These three Instances may suffice to shew what Credit should be given to an Author who wants Common Honesty, and who in defiance (as it were) of Truth advances Falsehoods in the very Face of Detection; and upon the whole it appears, that his Discourse against this Miracle of the Fig-tree is as Barren as the Fig-tree it self was, and whoever comes to it with Judgment, will find *nothing but Leaves thereon.*

IV. The fourth Miracle which I shall endeavour to set free from the Objections which *Mr. W.* has rais'd against it, is that of *(a) Jesus's turning Water into Wine at the Marriage Feast in Cana of Galilee.* John ii. 1, &c. The Literal Story of which he has attack'd under the Character of a Jewish Rabbi, with all the Spite to Christianity that the Ancient Jewish Rabbins shew'd to its Founder, and with such Ill Manners as no Modern Jews among Us (I am persuaded) would offer to a Church and State so Indulgent to them as Ours is. But whether the Invective come from Jew or Gentile, from the suppos'd Rabbi or *Mr. W.* himself, it is as much Wanting in Proof, as it is Abounding in Malice.

An Outcry he has rais'd, and there seems at first Sight to be some Difficulty in the Story, as he has manag'd it; and therefore I will examine to the Bottom all that He has advanc'd in his Own or the Rabbi's name. And in doing it I shall take the same Course as I have hitherto done, tho' I now find more

(a) *Mr. W's* Discourse 4. p. 23.

Difficulty than formerly; for his Objections against this Miracle lye in such Confusion, that this part of his Discourse more peculiarly requires some Skill and Pains to bring it into any Order.

However the Chief Objections are contain'd (or at least will be answer'd) under these three Heads.

How came *Jesus* to vouchsafe his Presence at a Wedding? p. 30.

Why did he supply the Guests with so large a Quantity of Wine, when it is said they had *well drunk* already? p. 24, 31.

How came he to give such an answer to his Mother, as *Woman what have I to do with you?* p. 32.

I. §. To the first Question, *How came Jesus to vouchsafe his Presence at a Wedding?* I may answer with another Question, Why should he *not* have gone thither, when he was invited? Tradition says that the Persons, whose Wedding was then celebrating, were *Alpheus* or *Cleopas*, and her who in the Sacred Scripture is called *Mary* the Sister of *Jesus's* Mother: but, without depending upon Tradition, it seems not unlikely from some Circumstances of the story that they were either Relations to the Virgin *Mary*, or her Intimate Acquaintance; for we find Her Interesting her self that the Guests might be supply'd when the Wine was wanting, and taking upon her to give the Servants Directions to do whatever her Son should bid them do, ver. 9. Now if *Jesus* and his Disciples were invited to come, and if the New-married Couple were of his Kindred and Acquaintance, what reason can be assign'd, why he ought to have declin'd the Invitation? Is it Certain that such Indecencies, as *Wife* and *Good* men should not be Witnesses to, are practis'd at all Weddings? or might not the Company have been restrained by the Presence of *Jesus* from any thing of Levity and Unbecoming Joy? How does this Author know how soon *Jesus* retir'd after the Meal was over? or why may not he suspect that *Jesus* introduc'd such a Religious Discourse, while he

he was there, as was Suitable to the solemn occasion: If he had read what the best Authors say of the Jewish Weddings, he would have found that such Liberties were not taken in Them as we see too often practis'd among us. But it seems that (according to Mr. W.) such *Excesses in drinking were there indulged*, as it was not fit for *Jesus to see and countenance*: This is the Material part, and therefore I proceed to

2. §. The second Objection which this Author has made, viz. *How came Jesus to supply the Guests with so large a quantity of Wine, when it is said, that they had well drunk already?* And to clear up this matter the better, I shall prove these two things, That there is no foundation in the Text to conclude that there was any Excess of that sort committed there; and that the Quantity of Wine, which *Jesus* miraculously provided, was not such as must needs have made him accessory to any Excess among the Guests.

For proving the first of these, let us consider the force of the words which are made the ground of the Objection, *Every man at the beginning doth set forth good Wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is Worse: but thou hast kept the good Wine until now*, ver. 10. But we are to remember who it is that says this; it is *the Governour of the Feast*, speaking to the *Bridegroom*: and the Drift of his Speech is only to shew, that one thing usually observ'd in such Feasts was not observ'd in This; for in Them the Best Wine was us'd to be brought out first, whereas Here was produc'd *not* at the first: the Circumstance of men's having *well drunk* in other Feasts when the Worse Wine was serv'd up, does not necessarily require any Parallel in this Feast; it may have been only thrown in by the by, as it is a known and allow'd thing for Poets in working up a similitude, to throw in little Circumstances which have no resemblance to the Fact which the similitude is illustrating. What the *Gouverneur of the Feast* said on this occasion was as True and as Pertinent, if the Company present had not *well drunk*, because his Intention was on-

ly to shew that there was a wide Difference in one Instance between what was done at This, and what was commonly done at Other Entertainments: Is it not a piece of Violence then to force every part of the Speech into a Parallell, and to conclude from such a Chance Expression as this that the Guests at the Wedding Dinner had already drank to Excess?

But allowing (what is so unreasonably contended for) that the Phrase, *when men have well drunk*, *ἄνθρωποι μεθύοντες*, is a Description of the Condition which the Guests were Then in; yet this Objector will get little by it, because it does not necessarily carry any Ill Sense along with it. The word is often us'd for drinking more than men usually do, but without any Intemperance. And can any Serious Writer think that St. *John* meant it otherwise here? Is it to be imagin'd that the Apostle intended to expose his Master's Behaviour on this occasion? or that he would have us'd the word, if he had not known that it bore an Innocent Sense as well as Vicious one? *μεθύειν* in its primitive signification is only *drinking after the Sacrifice*, and nothing in the Derivation of the word determines this to be done to any Excess, or beyond the proper bounds of Joy on a Festival: And if besides the Etymology of the Word, an Instance be requir'd, in which it is thus us'd for drinking *not* Intemperately, we find one in the LXX version of *Genesis* xliii. 34. where it is said that *Joseph's* brethren *ἐμεθύοντο μετ' αὐτοῦ*; and yet the Circumstances of that Feast, which *Joseph* made for his Brethren, plainly shew, that no Excess or Approach to it is intended by the Expression; for they knew him not then to be any other than the *Governour of Egypt*, nay it is said that *they were afraid of him*, ver. 18. and their whole Behaviour before and at the Feast must convince us that they were too much on their Guard, and too solicitous about their own Safety, to give way to any Intemperance in his Presence. And the same sense of the like word is to be seen in what God (according to the LXX version) says to the *Jews*, *Hag.* i. 6. where complaining that they neglected to build his

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Temple, he tells them that on this account he had not blessed the Fruits of their Land with the Ordinary Increase, *Tē have sown much and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink*: the Greek is *ἐν τῇ γῇ ἡ ἐκ τῆς γῆς οὐκ ἐπὶ τὸ μέτρον*. Are we to think that the LXX Interpreters intended to make God use the word here in the sense that Mr. W. gives it in St. John? for could that be a Punishment worthy of God to inflict? or could it be a Blessing, fit to encourage them to expect, that they should drink *ἐκ τῆς γῆς οὐκ ἐπὶ τὸ μέτρον* to Excess, as this Author would understand it?

Every candid man then must acknowledge that it is a meer Cavil, first to suppose the words to be spoken of the Guests at this Feast, when there is no Appearance that it was a Description of Them; and then to give the words a Vicious sense, which they do not necessarily bear and which there is all the Reason imaginable to believe that they were not in this Place intended to bear. This Way of Interpreting may shew men's Good-will to Infidelity, but it shews a very Ill Will to every thing else.

The next thing which I was to prove was this; that the Quantity of Wine which *Jesus* produc'd on this Occasion was not such as must needs have made him accessory to any Excess among the Guests.

A Rabbi, or a W. might have known that the Jewish (a) Marriages were celebrated with Feastings, not only on the days of the Solemnity, (as with us) but for six or seven days after: and that at these Feasts, not only all their Relations, Neighbours and Acquaintance were invited, but it was well taken if any others (tho' not invited) would come to partake of the Entertainment, and bear a share in the Joy of the Occasion: A Custom which to this day prevails among Us too, in some of the most remote parts of our Country. And as to this Marriage, though the Evangelist's words are rendered

(a) See Calmet's Dissertation, *Sur les Mariages des Hebreux.*

(a) *The third day there was a Marriage, &c.* yet they may be as well translated thus, (b) *On the third day a Marriage Feast was celebrated, &c.* Some think (and not without appearance of Reason) that by *the third day* is meant the Third day of the Marriage-Feast; and whether that Interpretation be allow'd or not, yet since it is so well known that the *Jews* feasted seven days on such occasions, and since it is not said on what Day this Miracle was wrought, we are at Liberty to suppose that it might as well have been on the Third day after the Marriage as on any other.

That there were great Numbers present at it, may be gather'd from there being a *Governour of the Feast* appointed for this occasion; and it is probable that many more than were expected came there on that day, perhaps to see *Jesus* and his Disciples, of whom they had heard much Talk; on this account, or because on the preceeding days the Bride and Bridegroom had entertained more Guests than they had looked and provided for, the Wine might fall short, which they had laid up for the whole seven days Feasting: Allowing then that the Quantity of Wine which *Jesus* made at this Feast was as Large as our Translation represents it, yet why should not Mr. *W.* suppose (what is very Probable) that the Wine thus Miraculously produc'd was design'd not only to supply the want of that day, but of the succeeding ones, till the *whole time* of Feasting was ended? Ill nature always makes the Worst of every thing; but an unprejudic'd man may (upon this reasonable Supposition) believe that there might be no Excess countenanc'd or practis'd, tho' the Supply of Wine was so Plentiful.

But what if our Translation should not be so Accurate here as in other Places? What if the *six Waterpots* did not hold so much as *two or three Firkins apiece*?

(a) Τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ γάμος ἐγένετο, &c.

(b) So the *Syriac* renders it in this place, and *Grotius* proves that γάμος has this Signification in several places of the Sacred Scripture. See his Note on *Matt. xxii. 2.*

Mr. *W.* himself says, p. 26. that if he had been the *Translator*, they should not have held above two or three pints a-piece, which measure is as agreeable to the Original as *Firkin*. If so, why is the Miracle to be flouted at? and why should not he content himself to raise an Outcry against the Translation? He might have known that the Learned of all Communions have of late looked more nicely into the *μετρητις* or *measure* here spoken of, and have brought it much lower than a *Firkin*: The LXX Translators in 2 *Chron* iv. 5. use the word *μετρητις* for the *Bath* of the *Jews*, and *Calmet* in his *Dissertation on the Antiquity of Money*, makes the *Bath* to contain less than 30 French Pints, i. e. less than six Gallons of our English Measure: *Lami* sets it still lower, and makes it hold very little more than twenty French Pints, which brings the measure down to less than four Gallons: *Le Clerc*, with others mentioned by *Calmet*, says that the *μετρητις* held about twenty five French pounds of Water, which fall short of three Gallons of our measure: And the Learned Bishop *Cumberland* (whose Accuracy in this part of Knowledge is allow'd by all) proves that most probably the *μετρητις* of *Syria* is meant here, and That he computes to have held less than one English Gallon; and according to this Reckoning the whole six *Waterpots* might not contain more than about fourteen or fifteen Gallons of English Measure; a Quantity not very Large, if we allow (as we must) that there were great Numbers present at the Feast; or that, what was not then drank, might be a seasonable Supply for what would be wanting at the Feast of the ensuing days.

When the Learned, tho' differing in their Opinions, do yet all agree to fix the Quantity lower than a *Firkin*, and some of them so very much below it, as we have seen; is it Fair and Ingenuous in Mr. *W.* to take occasion from an Errour of the Translation to set the whole Letter of the Miracle at Defiance? since he himself knew (as he says) how to rectifie the Translation by making *Pints* of the *Firkins*: especially since,
if

if the Quantity were allowed to be as large as the Translation makes it, he knows that to provide Plenty is not to encourage Excess; what was more than sufficient, might be laid up for other opportunities: And he may as well charge God with promoting Drunkenness, when ever he blessed the Vineyards of the *Jews* with any Extraordinary Increase.

Upon the whole then, it appears that what Mr. *W.* says p. 24 that when *Jesus* turn'd the Water into Wine, *the Company were already drunk*, and what his *Rabbi* says in his Vulgar strain, p. 31. that *they were more than half seas over*, are Fictions of their Own; and since it may be fairly presum'd, and is by Mr. *W.* own'd, that the Quantity of Wine then Created, was not so Large as our Translation represents it; and since (if it was so Large) it is probable that it was intended for a seasonable Supply upon the remainder of the seven days Feasting, I conclude, that neither the Wit of Mr. *W.* nor (what he has a greater Share of) his Malice can make this Circumstance any Good Argument against the Letter of the Miracle.

3. §. There remains now only one more Objection to it, which is what *Jesus* reply'd to his Mother when she said *They have no Wine*; to which he answer'd, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* ver. 4. From which his captious *Rabbi* very boldly concludes, that *Jesus himself was a little in for it, or he had never spoke so waspishly and snappishly to his Mother*. p. 32. Whatever a common Reader may think of the words which our Saviour us'd towards her; yet a man of Learning might, and should know that *γυνή*, which we render *Woman*, was no Title of Disrespect or Indifference, as it seems to be in our Translation. For there was a time when *Jesus* call'd his Mother by this Appellation, and yet was certainly neither *Snappish* nor *Waspish* towards her; for when he was hanging on the Cross, and recommending both his Mother to the Care of his beloved Apostle, and that Apostle to the Affection of his Mother, he said, *John* xix. 26. (*a*) *Woman, behold thy*

thy Son. The word *γυνή* was an honourable Title, and often us'd by the best Writers when the highest mark of Respect is intended; of which many Instances might be given; particularly we find the polite (*b*) *Xenophon* putting this word into the mouth of one of the *Persian* Chieftains, when he was addressing himself to a Captive Lady of the highest Quality, and comforting her under her unfortunate Circumstances. The Expression is so common in this Sense that I shall offer no more Instances of it; but pass on to the remainder of *Jesus's* Answer, *What have I to do with Thee?* These words are generally understood as a Rebuke to her, and so they may be without giving room for any Objection against the Letter of the Story, much more for the Conclusion which *Mr. W's* Friend has drawn from it; For it is probable that she was desirous to see him work a Miracle, and that a little Vanity prompted her to this Desire; and was it an unsuitable Rebuke, to tell her (for the words import no more) that in the business of manifesting his Glory by Miracles she was to leave him to do what he thought proper? This very Phrase is sometimes us'd in the Scriptures, where nothing of Anger is conceiv'd, where only some dislike is express'd, and a gentle Check or Rebuke is given; for can we suppose that *David*, when (2 Sam. xvi. 10,) he said *What have I to do with you, ye Sons of Zeruiah?* was Angry or Waspish with *Abishai* for proposing to kill *Shimei* who had curs'd him, when *Abishai* stuck by him so faithfully in that great Defection, and meant what he propos'd out of a Friendly affection to *David*? It was a Rebuke, it is true, and so was This which *Jesus* reply'd to his Mother: But it was a justifiable one; for whatever Obedience he owed to her as a Son, he ow'd none to her as a Prophet and Worker

(a) Γύναι, ἵδὲ ὁ υἱός σου.

(b) Ὁ γεραίτερος αἰνέσας Θεός. ὦ γύναι, καλὸν μὲν γὰρ καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἀπεύμεν καὶ τὸ σὺν ἀνδράσι εἶναι, &c. Cyrop. Lib. 5. p. 317.
Edit. Hutchinson.

of Miracles: In this Capacity he was the *Son* of God only, there was no Relation between Him and the Virgin *Mary*; therefore in what she meant by saying *They have no Wine*, she exceeded her Authority, and was justly reprov'd for it. But is this of Weight to overthrow a Miracle? All the other Objections I have shewn to be False and Ill-grounded: this is the only one that has any Truth in it, and I will venture to leave it to the Judgment of any Impartial man, whether the single Circumstance of our Saviour's rebuking his Mother in such a Case is sufficient to call in Question the Reality of a Miracle so particularly and so plainly related by the Evangelist.

I have now finished what I intended to say in vindication of these two Miracles of *Jesus*, his causing the Barren *Fig-tree* to wither, and his turning the *Water* into *Wine*; and I assure the Reader that the same Ignorance and Dishonesty furnishes Mr. *W.* with his Objections against the rest of the Miracles: But, before I conclude, I must again take Notice (as I have frequently done) that having in my First Part established the Resurrection of *Jesus* beyond all Doubt and Contradiction, I have laid a sure Foundation for the Credit of all the Miracles which the Evangelists have ascribed to him: Allow but That to have been a Real one, and you must allow all the rest which are reported by the same Authors. It is not enough to pick here and there a Hole in their Relation, and set up a few Objections against them, which the more Ignorant a man is, the more plentifully he may be furnished with: Nothing less than the shewing that some Part of the Literal Story is absolutely Impossible to have happen'd, or that something which *Jesus* is said to have done is Absolutely Inconsistent with the Divine Perfections, I say nothing less than This can make a Reasonable man Disbelieve, and even Then his Disbelief will go no farther than to the Circumstance which has This Weight lying on it. But the Objections, which Mr. *W.* has thrown out against the Miracles

racles that have been consider'd, and which may be sup-
 posed to be the Best that his Party could furnish him
 with are so Weak and Feeble, that while He and
 They are giving up their Character as Christians, they
 are forfeiting it too as Scholars: even an Adversary
 would see with Pity the Advances they have made in
 Dulness; they are *vel Priamo miseranda manus*: at
 least they would be so, if Ignorance was their only
 Fault; but it has appeared to the Reader in many In-
 stances how little Regard the Author of those *Discourses*
 pays to Truth, how little even to the Certainty of be-
 ing Detected in Falsehoods: And when men have so
 Profess'dly (as it were) leap'd over the Bonds of Com-
 mon Honesty, when they not only venture to be thus
 Immoral, but are come to despise the Shame of it, shall
 such as these set up for our Directors in Religion? Shall
 such as These have any Influence on our Faith, who
 neither Believe nor are to be Believed? who when they
 stripp'd their own Religion of Faith, tore off so much
 of Morality with it; who with all the Arts and Cheats
 of Impostors carry on their attacks against Christianity
 as a Cheat and Imposture, thereby Practising what they
 Write against and putting on the very Character which
 they would fix upon the Apostles? Whoever they be that
 have been so carried away with the Bewitching Pleasure
 of Novelty as to be fond of such Writings, their Reco-
 very is very difficult, if the Excellent and truly *Pastoral*
Letter of the *Lord Bishop of London* has not yet brought
 them back to a serious Consideration; They may have
 been misled, but they have no Excuse for continuing in
 their Error; for nothing but the Badness of the Cause can
 exceed the Badness of the Methods it is supported with.
 And the Writings of such Infidels are as Weak, as they
 are Dishonest; they are an Insult upon the Common
 Sense of Mankind, and every Reader must have the
 lowest Opinion of such *Discourses*, as suppose either
 that they shall find men *Fools*, or that they shall make
 them so.

F I N I S.